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Review and implementation of the Concluding Document of the Twelfth Special Session of the General Assembly: regional confidence-building measures: activities of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

Security Council
Sixty-seventh year

Letter dated 13 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as representative of the current Chairman of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, I have the honour to transmit herewith the report of the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting of the Committee, which took place in Bujumbura from 14 to 18 May 2012 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would have this letter and its annex circulated as a document of the General Assembly under item 96 (e) of the provisional list for the sixty-seventh session, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Herménégilde **Niyonzima**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/67/150.

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Annex to the letter dated 13 August 2012 from the Permanent Representative of Burundi to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

Report of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

A. Introduction

1. The thirty-fourth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa was held in Bujumbura from 14 to 18 May 2012.

2. The following member States participated in the meeting: the Republic of Angola, the Republic of Burundi, the Republic of Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Republic of Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of the Congo, the Gabonese Republic, the Republic of Equatorial Guinea, the Republic of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe.

3. The United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) served as the Committee's secretariat. The Secretary-General of the United Nations was represented by Abou Moussa, Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA.

4. The following United Nations entities took part in the proceedings as observers: the United Nations Office in Burundi (BNUB), the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa (UNREC), the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA), the subregional office for Central Africa of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women) and UNOCA.

5. The following entities also participated as observers: the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States (RECSA).

6. The meeting of experts opened with a ceremony that included, inter alia, a statement by the Permanent Secretary of the Burundian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Gérard Bikebako. Among a number of points made, he recalled the Committee's key role in promoting peace and security in the subregion and said he hoped that the thirty-fourth meeting of the Committee in Bujumbura would constitute a further link in the chain enabling member States to work together more effectively to find solutions to the security challenges faced by the subregion.

7. The opening ceremony featured:

- A message from the Secretary-General of ECCAS, read out by the regional Chief of Staff of the Central Africa Multinational Force, Brigadier Daniel Savihemba Raimundo

- A message from the Secretary-General of the United Nations, read out by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Mr. Moussa
- A statement by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Central Africans Abroad, General Antoine Gambi
- A statement by the Minister of Defence and Former Combatants of Burundi, Major-General Pontien Gaciyubwenge, on behalf of the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation

8. The closing ceremony featured:

- A closing statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA
- A closing speech by the Minister of Defence and Former Combatants, Major-General Pontien Gaciyubwenge

B. Summary of the proceedings

I. Adoption of the agenda

9. The Committee adopted the following agenda:

1. Adoption of the agenda;
2. Election of the Bureau;
3. Report of the outgoing Bureau;
4. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa;
5. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative:
   - Status of ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention
   - Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa
6. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa:
   - Implementation of the Kinshasa Convention
   - Briefing by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa
   - Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa
7. Piracy and maritime security:
   - Establishment of the Central African Regional Centre for Maritime Security (CRESMAC)
   - Organization of a conference on piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

8. Combating armed groups in Central Africa;

9. Implementation of United Nations General Assembly resolution 65/189;

10. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control;

11. Briefing by bodies with observer status with the Committee;

12. Report by the Secretariat of ECCAS on the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, as well as the development of strategic partnerships;

13. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States;

14. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee;

15. Place and date of the next meeting;

16. Other matters;

17. Adoption of the report of the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting.

II. Election of the Bureau

10. His Excellency Mr. Laurent Kavakure, Burundian Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation was elected Chairman of the Committee by acclamation.

11. The Committee also elected the following countries as members of the Bureau:

- First Vice-Chairman: Republic of the Congo
- Second Vice-Chairman: Republic of Equatorial Guinea
- Rapporteur: Republic of Rwanda

III. Report of the outgoing Bureau

12. The Committee took note of the report of the outgoing Bureau read by its Chairman. It commended the members of the Bureau on the high quality of their work and on their preparations for the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting. The Committee suggested that the Bureau should transmit its report to member States two weeks before the start of each meeting.

IV. Review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa

13. The working paper on the review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa, prepared by the ECCAS secretariat, formed the basis for the exchange of views among States.

14. The review of the geopolitical and security situation in the subregion focused on three main areas: political and institutional developments, domestic and cross-border security, and issues related to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights.

15. The discussions pointed up contrasting developments in the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa since the Committee's last meeting. On the one hand, significant progress has been achieved in the consolidation of democratic processes and the normal functioning of institutions. On the other hand, certain States in the subregion have had to deal with worrisome security situations.

16. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, while the calm that now prevails in some conflict zones is welcome, Central Africa has nonetheless faced a number of threats to peace and security, including acts of organized crime and maritime piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and persistent pockets of insecurity in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

17. Member States have undertaken substantial efforts with regard to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights. Relevant legal and institutional instruments governing this matter continue to be adopted and implemented by the various countries.

18. The Committee commended the ECCAS secretariat for its presentation of the working paper on the review of the geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa.

19. After a fruitful exchange, the Committee requested that in future the ECCAS secretariat should submit an analytical paper, together with any recommendations it might wish to make, especially with regard to the geopolitical and security situation of the subregion in general.

20. The geopolitical and security situation, country by country, is as follows:

Republic of Angola

21. Since the last meeting of the Committee in Bangui, Angola has been engaged in consolidating the stability of its democratic process, which has been following its normal course since the last presidential election and the adoption of the new constitution in 2010. At present, the country is actively preparing for the 2012 general elections.

22. In 2012, the commemoration of the tenth anniversary of the declaration of peace and national reconciliation, in accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2002 between the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA) and the Government, coincides with the country's assumption of the chair of the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries (CPLP) and the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

23. The Government is already engaged in reviewing and updating the electoral lists, undertaking a partial reform of electoral legislation and establishing a national electoral commission.

24. It should, however, be noted that, as is normal in any democratic society, some demonstrations led by a group of young people calling for an improvement in the country's social conditions have taken place. With regard to domestic and cross-

border security, the Angolan authorities are continuing with efforts to normalize the social fabric, through the sustainable development of the national economy and the construction of social infrastructure for the benefit of the population, as well as with peacebuilding efforts. Among the actions undertaken by the Government to facilitate this process, a large-scale campaign to recover weapons in the possession of civilians, and the mine clearance process under way, are already playing an important role.

Republic of Burundi

25. As highlighted in the previous review, the Republic of Burundi is continuing with the efforts to normalize political life, the economy and security conditions that were undertaken in the period following the end of the electoral process.

26. Nonetheless, a fringe opposition group, under the umbrella of an alliance of political parties that boycotted the legislative and presidential elections in 2010, continues to call for negotiations despite the Government's openness to dialogue. Some leaders of this opposition have chosen to go into exile but are demanding from abroad the right to participate in their country's political life. The Government has appealed several times to these leaders in exile to return to Burundi in order to contribute to the development efforts under way.

27. The security situation, meanwhile, has remained generally positive, although some crimes committed by armed gangs and terrorist groups, and some cases of murder arising from land disputes, are still being recorded.

28. All this is being fuelled to a major extent by arms trafficking at the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as highlighted in a United Nations report in November 2011. However, there is good cooperation with neighbouring countries on security, including efficient collaboration at all levels among military and administrative authorities, which exchange information on factors likely to disrupt security in Burundi.

29. Despite this difficult environment, the Burundian Government has continued to make significant efforts to achieve reconciliation and reconstruction, protect human rights, promote good governance, combat corruption and seek the well-being of its population through economic revitalization.

Republic of Cameroon

30. Since the Committee's last ministerial meeting, the overall climate in the Republic of Cameroon has been one of peace and stability.

31. A highlight of 2011 was the presidential election, which took place on 9 October 2011. The outcome was accepted by all candidates, although they noted some shortcomings apparently related to the very recent inception of Elections Cameroon (ELECAM), the body responsible for organizing and overseeing the elections, which the opposition suspects of being in the pay of the ruling party.

32. Since then, Cameroon has undertaken the reform of its electoral system. To that end it has recently drawn up a new electoral code, and ELECAM has decided to revise the electoral lists with the introduction of biometrics, in order to further enhance the transparency, legality and credibility of the election process.

33. Overall, the security situation has remained calm. Cameroon has made every effort to hold onto its major achievements of peace and stability. However, a number of poaching incidents were recorded in the Bouba N'Djida reserve, resulting in the slaughter of a large number of elephants there. Several steps have been taken to increase security in the region, in particular the deployment of special units, the provision of increased resources for relevant government departments and the strengthening of controls at the borders with the Central African Republic and Nigeria. In addition, a convention on cross-border security has been signed with Nigeria to strengthen border controls and help combat the activities of the Islamist group Boko Haram.

34. As for issues related to governance, the humanitarian situation and human rights, Cameroon has achieved significant improvements, as acknowledged by the international community. However, it is also recognized that Cameroon needs to make further efforts in that regard, as highlighted by a delegation of the African Commission on Human and Peoples' Rights on a visit to assess the status of human rights in the country.

35. Furthermore, the Cameroonian Government has continued its campaign to combat corruption and improve standards in public life, in particular by establishing a special criminal court, as well as bringing charges against other former senior Government officials.

Central African Republic

36. Since the last meeting the political situation in the Central African Republic has been characterized by the country's determination and efforts to consolidate its stabilization and democratization process.

37. Following presidential and legislative elections tainted by disagreement and numerous disputes, the political climate has gradually improved over the past six months. All democratic institutions are in place and operational, despite some difficulties relating to financial and material resources.

38. To meet its institutional requirements effectively, the Central African Government, in November 2011, after a participatory process, drafted a strategy paper on the economy and governance. The paper focused on three main issues: security and peace; governance and the rule of law; and economic recovery and regional integration, with the idea that peace and stability can be effectively established in this post-conflict country only by effectively stimulating the economy and improving people's living conditions. Such actions deserve encouragement and support.

39. Although there has been a noticeable improvement in domestic and cross-border security, the situation has remained fragile. The Convention des patriots pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) has finally signed a peace agreement with the Government authorities.

40. The Central African Republic has continued to face some insecurity in its northern region, generated by armed gangs with no clear ideology, particularly the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). In this regard, it is to be hoped that synergies between the United Nations, the African Union, ECCAS, the United States of America and the other States concerned will bear fruit.

41. Even worse, the Central African Republic has for some time been faced with acts of violence committed by an armed gang led by Baba Laddé of Front Populaire pour le Redressement, based in Central African territory. To address this situation, Chad and the Central African Republic undertook a joint military operation in January 2012. There is also ongoing cooperation between the Chadian and Central African Heads of State.

42. Despite this sensitive climate, the Central African authorities have continued to make major efforts, especially in the area of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, as well as security sector reform and preparations for the announced departure of the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic. Following the first phase of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration in the north of the country, a second phase has been launched in its central region.

Republic of the Congo

43. The observations made with regard to politics at the last ministerial meeting are still current, namely that the Congolese Government has been making efforts to preserve peace, national reconciliation and stability since the end of the armed conflict that afflicted the country in the 1990s.

44. At the political level, the democratic process is continuing and being consolidated, as demonstrated by the fact that the senatorial elections were organized peacefully in 2011 and that, despite a boycott by a fringe opposition group, inclusive political dialogue was held between the Government, the political parties and civil society in December 2011, ahead of the legislative elections in July and August 2012. The objective is to strengthen the democratic option by updating the electoral roll and undertaking a consensual revision of the corresponding law.

45. In terms of security, public order has continued to be effectively maintained. Similarly, the national campaign to disarm former combatants and recover weapons from them has continued with positive results. In order to consolidate the gains made in this area, the various government departments dealing with security issues consult each other on a regular basis.

46. Reference must be made, however, to the trauma caused by the explosion of an ammunition depot in Brazzaville, which left almost 300 people dead, 3,000 wounded and thousands displaced. This explosion also caused the destruction of hundreds of homes and considerable material damage. Investigations are under way to identify the reasons for the disaster and those who may be responsible for it. This situation means that there is a need for all States members of the Committee to strengthen safety measures for arms and ammunition depots.

47. With regard to governance, the authorities have kept in place the national plan to combat corruption and improve standards in public life.

48. On the humanitarian front, the Congo is committed to protecting refugees and combating the trafficking of children, as demonstrated by its signing of a joint plan of action against child trafficking, with Benin, in February 2012, and the organization of technical working groups on refugees with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

49. The Democratic Republic of the Congo has continued its efforts to maintain the stable and peaceful situation described in the geopolitical review at the last ministerial meeting.

50. In terms of politics, the presidential and legislative elections held on 28 November 2011 resulted in a victory for the presidential majority. In this context, a new Bureau of the National Assembly (five members of the presidential majority and two members of the opposition) and a new Government have taken office. As a consequence, the need now is for all political actors to prioritize dialogue and consultation, with a view to preparing for the forthcoming provincial elections, planned for the first quarter of 2013.

51. The Democratic Republic of the Congo is continuing preparations for the fourteenth Summit of the International Organization of la Francophonie, to be held from 12 to 14 October 2012.

52. With respect to domestic and cross-border security, the most recent development is the mutiny that has been taking place since the start of May 2012 within the Forces armées de la République Démocratique du Congo (FARDC), triggered by a small part of the forces of the former Congrès national pour la défense du peuple (CNDP). The mutiny has given rise to the M23 movement, led by Colonel Makenga, Bosco Ntanganda's former second-in-command. Their demands do not call into question the March 2009 Peace Agreement between the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and CNDP. Rather, they are personal manoeuvres by Mr. Ntanganda, who is the subject of an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court.

53. The Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Rwanda are working closely together to stabilize peace in the subregion. This work shows their desire to counter once and for all the emergence of new armed groups.

54. With regard to securing the country's shared borders with Burundi, FARDC and the Burundi National Defence Force (BNDF) are conducting joint operations to track down the armed groups, with commendable results.

55. Military operations against the Forces démocratiques de libération du Rwanda (FDLR) are continuing, through the joint efforts of FARDC and the Forces armées rwandaises, with logistical support from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO).

56. FARDC and the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF), with logistical help from MONUSCO, are tracking down the Ugandan rebel group Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF/NALU).

57. Light infantry units of FARDC and UPDF, trained by the United States army, have managed to markedly reduce the number of deadly attacks by LRA in the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

58. The joint efforts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, the United States and Uganda against the barbaric acts of LRA have led to the arrest of Caesar Acellam, fourth in the movement's chain of command.

59. The establishment by ICGLR of an intelligence fusion centre, with its headquarters in Goma, is worthy of note. The centre is a very important tool for improving communication between the various intelligence services.

60. As part of the implementation of its National Action Plan on small arms and light weapons, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has collected and destroyed a large quantity of weapons.

61. With regard to the humanitarian situation, there are now more than one and a half million internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government has made it an urgent priority to assist them and ensure that they can return to their areas of origin.

62. The latest developments in North Kivu have led to the displacement of 32,000 refugees, of whom 24,000 are in Uganda and 8,000 are in Rwanda. Arrangements are being made for their gradual return to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

63. With regard to human rights, the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains determined to prosecute all those identified as being responsible for criminal acts. It also remains open to working jointly with all bodies concerned by the matter.

Gabonese Republic

64. The overall situation in the Gabonese Republic since the last ministerial meeting has, as ever, been peaceful and stable. However, a number of political/legal and social observations have been made.

65. Peaceful legislative elections were organized in the country, against a backdrop of protest and a boycott by part of the opposition, which demanded that the elections should be postponed so that biometrics could be introduced into the electoral process and the electoral roll revised. Since the Constitutional Court did not judge these facts to be an event of force majeure, the Commission nationale autonome et permanente (CENAP), the body responsible for organizing and overseeing the elections, proceeded to hold the legislative elections on 17 December 2011. These elections, which were described as credible and transparent by international observers, resulted in victory for the ruling party, the Parti démocratique gabonais. The Government has undertaken to introduce biometrics and revise the electoral roll by 2013.

66. The social and security climate has remained positive, with the successful organization of the Africa Cup of Nations football championship. Admittedly, insecurity persists in the big cities, in the form of isolated ritual crimes and a strike at Omar Bongo University, where courses have been somewhat disrupted. Nevertheless, the country remains stable, with encouraging momentum as the Government implements reforms to enhance good governance, strengthen the rule of law, promote and protect human rights (with the competent authorities holding criminal hearings in respect of those responsible for the aforementioned crimes), and combat social inequality and the high cost of living.

67. On a completely different matter, Gabon hosted a number of meetings with Cameroon and Equatorial Guinea (in March and April 2012) to discuss, inter alia, questions related to borders and cross-border security. At the end of those meetings, the three countries reiterated their commitment to evaluating the management of migratory flows and cross-border security, identifying the difficulties encountered in

the application of the associated legal instruments, and providing information that would help to find new, reliable and sustainable strategies and solutions to those problems.

Republic of Equatorial Guinea

68. Since the Committee's thirty-third ministerial meeting, national life has continued to be dominated by the successful joint organization of the African Cup of Nations football championship in January and February 2012. Considerable efforts were made to strengthen peace and security in the country in the run-up to the event.

69. At the political level, a referendum was successfully held in November 2011 on a constitutional reform that will in future limit the president to two terms of office (97 per cent voted in favour of the reform). In April 2012 the fifth regular congress of the ruling party, the Partido Democrático de Guinea Ecuatorial (PDGE), was organized on the theme of the consolidation of democracy in the country, with the participation of all national political forces and with those of the subregion invited.

70. On the sociocultural front, the UNESCO-Equatorial Guinea Prize has just been unanimously approved; the aim of the prize is to help initiatives related to research in the life sciences.

71. The area of domestic and cross-border security, meanwhile, has been characterized by stability, with the national security services functioning normally.

72. In that regard, Equatorial Guinea has continued to control the constant flow of migrants into its territory, and to contain the ever growing problem of crime in its big cities. By way of example, incidents have regularly been reported in the city of Kye-Ossi, causing the temporary closure of the border with Cameroon. The authorities have therefore decided to strengthen their bilateral cooperation with Cameroon and Gabon through meetings of ad hoc cross-border security committees.

Republic of Rwanda

73. Since the Committee's last ministerial meeting, the overall situation in Rwanda has been characterized by stability and the normal functioning of its institutions, as has been the case in the country for more than 10 years.

74. At the political level, after the latest presidential and senatorial elections, the country has turned resolutely to economic and social development, thanks in particular to exemplary governance, as recognized by the observers. The World Bank's latest *Doing Business* report ranked Rwanda in third place among the countries of sub-Saharan Africa in terms of ease of doing business.

75. Similarly, according to Transparency International, Rwanda is the fourth least corrupt country in sub-Saharan Africa. This good governance and ease of doing business is encouraging foreign companies to invest in the country.

76. The favourable socioeconomic climate is helping to strengthen the credibility of, inter alia, Rwanda's judicial system, to the extent that, for the first time, the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR) has just transferred one of its detainees, Jean Bosco Uwinkindi, to be tried there.

77. Domestic and cross-border security continues to be effectively maintained. The trials of the perpetrators of the grenade attacks carried out in the country since 2010, and their accomplices, should be seen as part of this process.

78. At the same time, the Rwandan authorities suspended four high-ranking army officers pending an inquiry, as a result of which one of them, suspected of committing acts of indiscipline with civilian elements from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, has been cleared.

Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe

79. Since the last ministerial meeting, held in Bangui, the general situation in the Democratic Republic of Sao Tome and Principe has been one of peace and stability.

80. In political terms, following the country's elections, the Government is seeking ways of combating the poverty faced by certain segments of the population.

81. In that regard, measures are being taken to improve the business environment and so attract more foreign investors.

82. In terms of domestic and cross-border security, the situation is stable despite a difficult social climate, essentially attributable to the international financial crisis, which has led to a reduction in aid from partners.

83. Despite this difficult situation, the Government has continued to make encouraging progress, raising the salaries of the lowest-paid civil servants from January 2012 following fruitful negotiations with the main trade unions.

Republic of Chad

84. The overall situation in the Republic of Chad since the last ministerial meeting has been one of peace and stability. With respect to domestic politics, the dialogue between the Government and the opposition has continued. In this spirit, the election timetable has been maintained and adhered to despite certain disagreements between the Government and the opposition.

85. The electoral cycle began with the legislative elections of 13 February 2011, followed by presidential elections in April. The ruling party, the Mouvement patriotique du salut (MPS), won an absolute majority of 133 of the 188 seats in the National Assembly. The MPS candidate also won the presidential election with a large majority.

86. The electoral cycle ended in 2012, with municipal elections held on 12 January, which were also won by the ruling party. This renewed political stability has allowed the Government to embark on reforms in the areas of governance and infrastructure construction. The process of verifying and reducing personnel numbers in the defence and security forces, which has been initiated by the Government, should be seen as part of this process.

87. With regard to domestic and cross-border security, as pointed out at the last ministerial meeting, the peace process, fuelled by a favourable political climate, is progressing positively, to the extent that there are now virtually no armed rebels on Chadian territory.

88. It should be noted, however, that the crisis in Libya has created a climate of insecurity in the north of the country, with the return of thousands of Chadian nationals.

89. Lastly, the reappearance of an armed group along the border between Chad and the Central African Republic constitutes an obstacle to movement.

V. Implementation of the Sao Tome Initiative

Status of ratifications of the Kinshasa Convention

90. The States members of the Committee expressed the will and resolve of their respective Governments to ratify the Convention. The Committee noted the measures taken by the competent national authorities in all States members of the Committee to ensure that the Convention would enter into force no later than the date of the ceremony commemorating the twentieth anniversary of the Committee, planned for December 2012 in Brazzaville.

91. The Committee welcomed the announcement that the Central African Republic had ratified the Kinshasa Convention.

Implementation of the Code of Conduct for the Defence and Security Forces in Central Africa

92. The Committee decided to defer consideration of this item to its thirty-fifth meeting in Brazzaville.

VI. Promotion of disarmament and arms limitation programmes in Central Africa

Implementation of the Kinshasa Convention

93. Some member States reported on measures taken to implement the Convention in their respective countries. The representative of Cameroon gave an account of that country's cooperation with ECCAS. The representative of Burundi noted that five of the States members of the Committee, including Burundi, were signatories to the Nairobi Protocol. He noted that his country had a permanent national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, and listed some of its activities. He also reported on the experiences in implementing the Convention that Burundi was sharing with certain other States members of the Committee. The representative of the Congo said that his country also had a weapons management unit that had reviewed the plan for implementing the Convention and identified 71 tasks to be accomplished, for which he hoped ECCAS would provide assistance.

94. A representative of the ECCAS secretariat reported to the Committee on activities conducted during the reporting period in three of its main focus areas: reporting, publication and dissemination of information on the dangers of small arms and light weapons; development of institutional capacities at both the subregional and national levels; and cooperation and exchange of experiences with partners.

95. With regard to the reporting, publication and dissemination of information, the representative of the ECCAS secretariat reported on the drafting, publication and distribution, by various government agencies and civil society organizations in Central Africa, of educational materials on the dangers of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the subregion. The materials consisted of a booklet on procedures for the establishment and operationalization of national commissions to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa (May 2012), a pamphlet on ECCAS activities in support of efforts by States to prevent, combat and eliminate illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons in Central Africa (May 2012), and a curriculum for female trainers on the subject of women, armed violence and control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa (May 2012).

96. With regard to the development of institutional capacities, the ECCAS Secretariat had continued to strengthen institutional capacities at both the subregional and national levels. In N'Djamena, from 7 to 10 May 2012, it had held a subregional training seminar for women trainers from agencies with responsibility for small arms and light weapons on the subject of women, armed violence and control of small arms and light weapons in Central Africa. The seminar had been made possible by collaboration between the International Action Network on Small Arms (IANSA) Women's Network and the Chadian Government, with financial support from the European Union.

97. At the national level, in April 2012, ECCAS had provided technical support to the Gabonese national focal point for small arms and light weapons for the creation and drafting of the terms of reference of a campaign to register firearms and issue licences to own and carry such weapons in all nine provinces of Gabon. On 18 and 19 April 2012 in Libreville, in collaboration with the Gabonese Government, it held a technical preparatory meeting for the establishment of a national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Gabon. That meeting brought together representatives of ministerial departments, the two chambers of Parliament and civil society organizations.

98. With regard to cooperation and exchange of experiences, the ECCAS secretariat has exchanged experiences and best practices in combating the misuse of small arms and light weapons with a number of partners, in particular the African Union Commission, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), IANSA, the European Union and RECSA.

99. The Committee took note of a number of challenges that had been faced by the ECCAS secretariat in its follow-up and coordination role, which included a lack of financial support; the insufficient number of national commissions on small arms and light weapons to serve as the competent government authorities and liaise with ECCAS and other partners; failure of member States to attend certain international meetings at which the Central African position needed to be presented and defended; and failure to ratify the Kinshasa Convention in order to enable its entry into force and full implementation.

100. The Committee welcomed the information provided by the member States and ECCAS on implementation of the Convention and encouraged the continuation of the efforts made. It likewise welcomed the interest in the issue shown by partners and called on them to provide greater assistance to the countries of the subregion and to ECCAS in their efforts to implement the Convention.

Briefing by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa

101. The representative of UNREC gave a briefing covering conventional arms, weapons of mass destruction, and various other disarmament and arms control matters.

102. With regard to conventional weapons, the Committee was briefed on the session held in New York from 19 to 23 March 2012 of the preparatory committee for the second United Nations Conference to review progress made in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It was also updated on the small arms review Conference itself, scheduled to be held in New York from 27 August to 7 September 2012, which will review progress on the implementation of the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. The representative of UNREC stressed that the deadline for submission of national reports was mid-March 2012. Only two States members of the Committee had thus far submitted their reports. UNREC would hold a regional meeting, which could take place at the end of June 2012, to help African States better prepare for the review Conference.

103. The representative of UNREC also informed the Committee about timetables and measures taken in connection with the arms trade treaty. He reported on common positions developed by subregions, and noted that UNREC, in collaboration with IANSA and the African Union Commission, and with the financial support of the Australian Government, was planning a consultation on the arms trade treaty to be held on 21 and 22 May 2012 in Addis Ababa.

104. The representative of UNREC also touched on ammunition management, and described the new United Nations Safe*r*guard programme to secure ammunition depots. He emphasized the importance of good ammunition stockpile management, and noted that the United Nations, under the Safe*r*guard programme, had drafted the International Ammunition Technical Guidelines for safer and more secure stockpile management of conventional ammunition.

105. With regard to weapons of mass destruction it was noted that although all the Central African States had signed the Treaty of Pelindaba, only six had ratified it. The representative gave an account of the meeting of the Preparatory Committee for the 2015 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-proliferation of Nuclear Weapons held in Vienna from 30 April to 11 May 2012, and noted the obligation of States Members of the United Nations to submit their first reports on measures taken or planned to implement United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 (2004). Five States in Africa had not yet submitted their first reports.

106. Turning to various other disarmament and arms control matters, the representative of UNREC reported that the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters had held its fifty-seventh session from 22 to 24 February 2012 in New York. Its fifty-eighth session was scheduled to be held in Geneva from 4 to 6 July 2012.

107. With regard to the establishment of the Group of Governmental Experts on Developments in the Field of Information and Telecommunications in the Context of International Security, the representative of UNREC drew attention to the Group's report (A/65/201).

Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa

108. The representative of UNOCA recalled the recommendations adopted by the Committee at its thirty-third meeting regarding implementation of the Declaration on a road map for counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms in Central Africa. He said that UNOCA, since it did not have the necessary expertise on counter-terrorism and non-proliferation of arms, particularly in Central Africa, had addressed letters to both UNREC and the Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (CTED) with a view to facilitating implemeantation of the road map. The documents sent to UNOCA by CTED and UNREC had been distributed to delegations.

109. The Committee decided to consider those documents at its thirty-fifth meeting in Brazzaville.

VII. Piracy and maritime security

Operationalization of the Central African Regional Centre for Maritime Security

110. The Committee was informed that, following the signature by the ECCAS Heads of State and Government, on 24 October 2009 in Kinshasa, of the Protocol on the strategy to secure the vital interests of the member States of ECCAS in the Gulf of Guinea, the implementation of the strategy — which involves the operationalization of CRESMAC — has suffered from funding problems, as the expected contributions have not been received.

111. The Committee noted that, further to the directive arising from the 12th Defence and Security Commission (DSC) meeting held in July 2011 in Douala, Cameroon, regarding the establishment of an expert working group charged with the development of CRESMAC, the group had met from 21 to 23 April 2012 in Pointe-Noire, the headquarters of CRESMAC in the Republic of the Congo.

112. The Committee also received an update on exceptional contributions and the proposed 2013 budget for CRESMAC, estimated at 1,851,880,000 CFA francs (US$ 3,703,760).

113. Furthermore, the Committee noted a number of recommendations made by the experts regarding the next steps in the process of operationalizing CRESMAC; in particular, they recommended the convening of a meeting, before September 2012, of the ministers responsible for maritime transport of the States signatories to the Protocol, to raise awareness of the need to budget for the requirements of CRESMAC in 2013; continuation of work through two final meetings of the expert working group; and establishment of an operational core team based on the working group model, with its members designated by DSC (11 members).

114. The Committee took note of the political will shown by the Republic of Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Equatorial Guinea for the operationalization of CRESMAC and:

(a) For the multinational coordination centre in zone D:

- Provision by Cameroon of a developed site to accommodate the centre
- Logistical support for patrol vessels in zone D

- Provision by Equatorial Guinea of two studios and a liaison vehicle for commanders of patrol vessels belonging to the ECCAS Task Group, based in Malabo
- Provision by Cameroon of four apartments for officers from Gabon, Equatorial Guinea and Sao Tome and Principe serving in the multinational coordination centre in zone D in Douala; in addition, one pick-up and one Prado have been allocated to them
- Operational commitment by Equatorial Guinea to provide a new patrol vessel appropriate to the mission

(b) For CRESMAC infrastructure:

- A three-storey building to accommodate CRESMAC is under construction by the Republic of the Congo in Pointe-Noire

Organization of a conference on piracy and maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

115. The States noted that funding problems are also hindering the organization of this conference. The idea is to ensure that the conference is highly representative of the different government departments and organizations.

116. The Committee took note of Cameroon's renewed commitment to hosting the maritime conference and the serious discussions that are under way between ECCAS and the European Union on its funding.

VIII. Combating armed groups in Central Africa

117. The representative of UNOCA made a presentation in which he highlighted the concern of the international community regarding the existence of armed gangs and the consequences of their activities in the Central African subregion.

118. He particularly emphasized the harmful activities of LRA in four countries, two of which are in Central Africa (the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo). In that regard, he referred to the Security Council's presidential statement S/PRST/2011/21, which strongly condemned the attacks carried out by LRA in parts of Central Africa.

119. Through this statement, the Security Council encouraged UNOCA, inter alia, to work with the United Nations missions and the African Union to develop a regional strategy for international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance in the LRA-affected area. That strategy should allow the enhancement of cross-border mechanisms to improve civilian protection, early warning capacity, humanitarian access and response, and appropriate reintegration support for those returning from displacement, abductees and ex-combatants, as well as strengthening the overall capacity of affected States to extend their authority throughout their respective territories.

120. The representative reported on the activities of the Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary-General, the Head of UNOCA and the African Union Special Envoy in developing the strategy recommended by the Security Council.

121. The representative of ICGLR welcomed the establishment of UNOCA and said that ICGLR also provided significant support for the implementation of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army.

122. The Committee appreciated and encouraged those various initiatives. In addition, it welcomed the arrest of Caesar Achellam Otto, an LRA combatant, on 12 May 2012 in the Central African Republic. It stated that the capture was the result of joint efforts between the affected countries, their partners and subregional, regional and international organizations. The Committee stressed the need to develop such synergies in combating armed groups and called on the international community to continue working to find rapid solutions to the unbearable humanitarian plight of the victims of these armed groups, especially women and children.

123. The Committee particularly appreciated the establishment in Goma of an intelligence fusion centre with a view to the eradication of negative forces in the subregion, the fight against illegal exploitation of natural resources, and the organization in Kampala of a special summit on combating gender-based sexual violence.

IX. Implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189

124. The Committee followed with interest the presentation made by the Gabonese delegation on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 65/189 on International Widows' Day.

125. In Gabon, the resolution strengthens the national legal and institutional framework on the matter and sends a message of hope, solidarity and responsibility with a far-reaching impact, given that it will help to ensure genuine social cohesion.

126. The Government of Gabon, driven by fresh impetus in the implementation of the resolution, has taken a number of actions, including the amendment of some provisions of articles 79 and 81 of Act No. 6/75 of 25 November 1975 instituting a social security code (in the process of adoption by Parliament); the amendment and repeal of some provisions of Act No. 19/89 of 30 December 1989 relating to the adoption of the second part of the civil code (in the process of adoption by Parliament); the revision of the penal code, Act No. 4/96 of 11 March 1996 establishing the State pensions system, Act No. 8/91 on the general statutes of civil servants, Act No. 18/93 on the general statutes of the civil service and the decrees implementing those acts.

127. The reforms undertaken by the Government of Gabon are supported by associations and non-governmental organizations that, together with the Sylvia Bongo Ondimba Foundation, have pooled their efforts and advocate three strategic lines of action for the short, middle and long term.

128. Gabon intends, during its second annual celebration of International Widows' Day, on 23 June 2012, to evaluate its progress in implementing the short-term lines of action and, more importantly, to maintain its focus so as to ensure that the medium- and long-term goals are also met.

129. The Committee noted that implementation of the resolution represents a strong commitment to the women and orphans of the world, especially those living in Central Africa.

130. It urged the member States to implement this resolution and, at the same time, requested partners to provide support.

X. Implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009) on women and peace and security, and General Assembly resolution 65/69 on women, disarmament, non-proliferation and arms control

131. The Committee reaffirmed the complementary nature of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1889 (2009), as well as General Assembly resolution 65/69, and emphasized that these resolutions are essential tools for the prevention and resolution of conflicts and for peacebuilding and reconstruction in Central Africa.

132. The Committee took note of the presentation given by the representative of Burundi, which mainly concerned the incorporation of the gender dimension and involvement of women in the promotion of security, peace and disarmament. In that regard, the Committee welcomed the establishment in Burundi of a steering committee, which included all concerned stakeholders, to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000). It appreciated the adoption of an action plan to integrate women into the national police with a target of 10 per cent of the workforce by 2017, and the policy for recruiting women in the national defence force.

133. The Committee was informed of the national training plan under way on combating the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. The workshops bring together 25 delegates per province and are organized to raise awareness of the issue of gender and small arms and light weapons, with the aim of establishing a national network to combat gender-based armed violence, in accordance with the recommendations of the seminar on gender and small arms and light weapons held in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 23 to 26 April 2012.

134. The Committee encouraged member States to continue their efforts to implement the Security Council and General Assembly resolutions covered by the agenda item under consideration.

XI. Briefing by bodies with observer status with the Committee

135. The Committee noted with interest the briefing provided by the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa concerning the situation of human rights in the subregion.

136. The briefing discussed discrimination against vulnerable groups, including their participation in the political life of their respective countries, as well as human trafficking and migration, particularly of women and children. In cooperation with subregional States and partners, the Centre had organized a workshop in Yaoundé in January 2012 as a follow-up to the migration workshop which it had held in 2010.

The Centre had contributed financial and technical assistance to the inception of the regional campaign to prevent and combat human trafficking, which had taken place in Pointe-Noire, Republic of the Congo, in December 2011.

137. Results as regards democracy, elections and governance were mixed. Member States had, however, been making efforts, and there had been some progress. That impetus should be encouraged and supported.

138. The representative of the Yaoundé subregional office of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) made a brief presentation regarding ECA and, in particular, the office's programme on post-conflict management and governance.

139. The Committee was informed that the participants at a forum held in Bujumbura from 8 to 10 December 2009 regarding rehabilitation, post-conflict reconstruction and economic revitalization in Central Africa had recommended that a "council of elders" should be established as a mediator for the prevention and management of conflict or, alternatively, that the powers of the Secretary-General of ECCAS in respect of mediation should be strengthened.

140. The Committee noted that the subregional office of ECA was prepared to provide member States and regional economic communities with advice and short-term technical assistance in order to build capacities for peace, security and sustainable development. The Committee encouraged member States to explore options for cooperation with ECA with a view to benefiting from such assistance.

141. The representative of UNREC reiterated his appeal for member States to take part in preparatory meetings concerning deadlines for disarmament in general and the arms trade treaty in particular.

142. The Committee heard with interest the briefing of the Regional Director of UN-Women for the Central Africa region, which discussed the mission, structure and priority activities of her office, as well as the situation and prospects of women in Central Africa.

143. The Committee took note of the information provided by the Regional Director. It welcomed certain member States' efforts in respect of policies to promote and protect women's rights. It expressed appreciation for the various proactive measures taken in order to address the deficit in women's education, recognition of their rights and integration in economic and social life as compared with men.

144. The Committee nevertheless found that further efforts were needed, especially in rural areas, in order to enable women to be effective stakeholders and beneficiaries of development, particularly with regard to education, health, employment, access to credit and means of production and, not least, leadership.

145. The Committee welcomed the readiness of the subregional office of UN-Women to continue supporting member States in strengthening the capacities of women in the subregion. It commended UN-Women, UNOCA and the ECA subregional office for Central Africa for their determination to cooperate in order to improve synergies and find solutions to the issues facing the Central African subregion, particularly with regard to implementation of Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009) and 1960 (2010), including by putting in place an effective network of women mediators for peace and security.

146. The Committee took note of the presentation given by the representative of ICGLR concerning his mandate and activities.

147. In particular, it welcomed the establishment of an intelligence fusion centre in Goma with a view to the eradication of negative forces in the subregion; the fight against illegal exploitation of natural resources; and the convening of a special summit in Kampala on combating gender-based sexual violence.

148. The Committee expressed concern at the illicit exploitation of natural resources to fund conflicts in Central Africa. It commended ICGLR for its initiative, in cooperation with other partners, to put in place tools to prevent and resolve conflicts.

149. The Committee commended the efforts of ICGLR to promote cross-border security. It noted that ICGLR was prepared to cooperate with UNOCA on cross-border security issues.

150. The representative of RECSA handed out a document concerning his agency's activities at the continental level. He had secured European Union funding for activities to prevent, control and reduce the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in Africa, excluding North Africa. Those activities were organized through four regional economic communities: ECCAS, the Economic Community of West African States, SADC and the East African Community. Relevant programmes included support for civil society initiatives and for the establishment of national committees on small arms and light weapons; support for the development of national plans to manage small arms and light weapons; harmonization and updating of legislation; and destruction of surplus or obsolete weapons.

151. The Committee commended the efforts made by RECSA and encouraged it to continue its work, particularly the establishment of forums to manage shared borders in Central Africa.

152. The representative of UNOCA provided an overview of the Office's conflict prevention and peacebuilding activities. He said that UNOCA played an active role in combating LRA, particularly through its strong support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army.

153. He said that between January and April 2012, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA had conducted joint missions, in collaboration with the African Union Special Envoy for the LRA issue, in the four countries affected by the armed group's activities. He recalled that the fight against LRA, which the African Union defined as a terrorist group, was one of the priorities of UNOCA for 2012.

154. He informed the Committee of the Office's other priorities, namely good offices and mediation; electoral processes; the fight against piracy in the Gulf of Guinea; youth employment and State stability; support for the work of the Committee, for which UNOCA acts as secretariat; and support for the capacity-building of subregional organizations. With regard to the latter, the Committee appreciated the spirit of collaboration between UNOCA and ECCAS, which had signed a framework agreement of cooperation on 3 May 2012.

155. The representative of UNOCA stated that the Office had recently taken significant action to deploy preventive diplomacy and make the international community better aware of peace and security issues in the Central African

subregion. It had held regular meetings with diplomats, representatives of international organizations and key partners such as the media and academic institutions.

156. The Committee welcomed the efforts of observers, particularly those of the United Nations, to coordinate their work in order to improve results on the ground. It encouraged them to redouble their efforts to continue providing assistance to the Central African subregion.

XII. Report by the secretariat of the Economic Community of Central African States on the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, as well as the development of strategic partnerships

157. The Committee heard with interest a presentation by the secretariat of ECCAS concerning the institutional evolution of subregional peace and security structures and mechanisms, as well as the development of strategic partnerships.

158. The Committee was informed of the challenges facing the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa and the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic. In particular, the Committee was informed of the measures in place for the withdrawal of the Mission by 31 December 2013 in accordance with the outcomes of the first extraordinary meeting of the Defence and Security Commission held in Bangui on 10 and 11 April 2012. The Committee followed up other recent activities of the Central Africa Multinational Force with regard to centres of excellence and civilian, police and military components.

159. ECCAS explained the operation of the early warning mechanism for Central Africa and highlighted the challenges which it faced. Since the conference of Heads of State and Government held in N'djamena in January 2012, a director for the mechanism had yet to be appointed. The Committee commended the quality of the specialized entity's work and highlighted the need to strengthen its capacity, in terms of both human and financial resources, in order to maximize its output.

160. The Committee welcomed developments in the strategic partnerships entered into by ECCAS and the African Union with the European Union, in particular the African Peace Facility and the Programme of Support in the Areas of Peace and Security.

XIII. Review of the financial situation of the Committee: implementation of the Libreville Declaration by member States

161. The Committee commended the two member States of the Committee that had contributed to its Trust Fund and appealed to those States that had not done so to comply with their commitments.

162. The Committee noted that unless robust measures were taken by States, the adverse financial situation could affect the smooth functioning of the Committee.

163. The Committee noted the States' political commitment and encouraged them to comply with their commitments under the Libreville Declaration.

XIV. Preparations for the commemoration of the twentieth anniversary of the Committee

164. The Committee noted that, in view of the Committee's financial difficulties, the preparatory committee had proposed that the anniversary should be commemorated at its thirty-fifth meeting. The Committee therefore decided that its twentieth anniversary would be commemorated at its thirty-fifth meeting.

165. The Committee highlighted the importance of commemorating its twentieth anniversary and reiterated its gratitude to the Government of the Republic of the Congo for agreeing to host its thirty-fifth meeting and the celebration of its twentieth anniversary.

166. The Committee recalled that activities related to that celebration would be funded exclusively from the Trust Fund. It therefore appealed to the political commitment of member States, calling on them to comply with their financial obligations in order to create the conditions for a successful commemorative meeting.

XV. Place and date of the next meeting

167. The Committee decided to hold its thirty-fifth ministerial meeting in Brazzaville.

168. The meeting will take place from 3 to 7 December 2012.

XVI. Other matters

169. The secretariat suggested that member States should provide it with a list of names and contact details of focal points and their alternates in order to improve communication on issues concerning the Committee's work.

170. The secretariat also suggested that the Committee should, at its thirty-fifth meeting, give substantive consideration to the question of the Committee's use of official and working languages.

171. The Committee took note of the suggestions made by the secretariat.

XVII. Adoption of the report of the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting

172. The Committee adopted the present report on 18 May 2012.

C. Expression of thanks

173. The following expression of thanks was read out:

> "We, representatives of the States members of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, gathered on the occasion of the thirty-fourth ministerial meeting, from 14 to 18 May 2012 in Bujumbura,

Reaffirm our attachment to the ideals of peace, stability and security that are so necessary for our respective peoples and for the socioeconomic development of our subregion;

Welcome the efforts made by our countries, individually and collectively, to promote peace, security, stability and development;

Welcome the atmosphere of conviviality, brotherhood and mutual trust that has prevailed throughout our work;

Express our sincere thanks and our profound gratitude to His Excellency Mr. Pierre Nkurunziza, President of the Republic of Burundi, and to the Government and people of Burundi, for the warm and fraternal welcome we have received during our stay in the Republic of Burundi."

Bujumbura, 18 May 2012